

A Guide to the Isaac F. Thomas Letters, 1861-1864

Isaac F. Thomas Papers, 1861-1864
1861-1864

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 42854
Library of Virginia
2007

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History

Processed by: Jessica Tyree

Title Statement

A Guide to the Isaac F. Thomas Letters, 1861-1864

Subtitle: Thomas, Isaac F., Papers, 1861-1864

Collection: 42854

Author: Jessica Tyree

Publication Statement

Date: © 2007 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by Jessica Tyree, 20 September 2007

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Accession Number

42854 (Miscellaneous reel 5229)

Language

English

Creator

Thomas, Isaac F., 1837-1906

Extent

1 reel of microfilm

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Loaned for microfilming by Emory & Henry College on 18 September 2006.

Preferred Citation

Isaac F. Thomas Papers, 1861-1864. Accession 42854. Personal papers collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Originals in the collection of the Emory & Henry College Archives, Emory, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Location of Originals

Originals are owned by Emory & Henry College, Emory, Virginia.

Biographical Information

Isaac Franklin Thomas was born 21 October 1837 near Fries, Grayson County, Virginia, the son of Wesley (b. ca. 1804) and Elizabeth Thomas (b. ca. 1801). He enlisted with the Confederate States Army on 29 May 1861 in Wytheville, Virginia. Later that year, Thomas contracted typhoid fever, and spent some time as a hospital patient. Upon recovery he stayed on at the hospital as a nurse, and then commissary and steward. In the spring of 1862, he was assigned duties as a ferryman on New River at Narrows, Virginia, where he spent most of his service until mid-1864, when he began moving north with his unit. Thomas was captured at the Third Battle of Winchester, Virginia, on 19 September 1864, and sent to prison at Point Lookout, Maryland. Official records state that he was exchanged on 15 March 1865, but his descendants dispute this, saying he was never paroled or exchanged, but escaped and returned home to Grayson County on foot about June or July 1866. He married Nancy Saunders Perkins on 1 January 1867. Isaac Thomas died on 10 June 1906.

Scope and Content

Letters, 1861-1864, from Isaac F. Thomas (1837-1906), of the 45th Virginia Infantry Regiment, Company C, to his parents, Wesley (b. ca. 1804) and Elizabeth Thomas (b. ca. 1801) of Grayson County, Virginia. Thomas's letters find him in Botetourt, Giles, Shenandoah, and Wythe Counties, Virginia; and Berkeley, Fayette, Greenbrier, Kanawha, Mercer, and Monroe Counties, (West) Virginia. Topics include the movements of the 45th Virginia and the Grayson Cavalry (8th Virginia Cavalry, Company C), the unit to which his brother Osker Thomas (b. 1834) belonged; the health and safety of various acquaintances; his recovery from typhoid fever; encounters between Confederate and Union scouts in the area; reports of various skirmishes and larger engagements, including fighting around Winchester, Virginia, in the summer of 1864, and the 9 May 1864 Battle of Cloyd's Mountain; camp life; prices and the value of Confederate currency; and his assignments as a nurse and commissary at a CSA hospital in Red Sulphur Springs, Monroe County, and a ferryman at New River in Narrows, Giles County, Virginia. The last letter is dated 20 August 1864, a few weeks prior to Thomas's being taken prisoner at the Third Battle of Winchester, Virginia, on 19 September 1864. Also included are copies of Thomas's service record from the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and a biography of him written by two of his grandchildren.

Contents List

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